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**From:** Turchie, Donna (TRO-09)  
**To:** Ossi, Joseph (TPL)  
**Sent:** 1/16/2003 6:50:25 AM  
**Subject:** FW: FTA article: LRT is back on the agenda in Honolulu

Hi Joe:

This ought to get you out of your seat! Ha Ha. Looks like more environmental to keep us busy!!

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Luden, Hymie (TRO-09)  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 16, 2003 8:41 AM  
**Subject:** FTA article: LRT is back on the agenda in Honolulu

### Light rail back on the agenda

Honolulu Advertiser

January 16, 2003

The legislative session consists of 60 working days through May 1. Nearly a third of the lawmakers are new: seven of 25 in the Senate and 16 of 51 in the House.

Proposals unveiled in the opening day speeches, while generating publicity, are not always successful. For example, speeches in the past couple of years raised issues such as a nonbinding gambling referendum, gambling to finance long-term care, expanding prison space, and giving the University of Hawai'i control of Aloha Stadium. None has succeeded.

Perhaps the most surprising proposal came from Senate President Robert Bunda, who revived the issue of a light-rail mass transit system for O'ahu.

At a time when the city is moving forward with its Bus Rapid Transit program and before Lingle is expected to unveil her own proposals, Bunda said: "I believe it's time we dusted off our plans for a light-rail, mass transit system" linking central areas of O'ahu with the city's proposed plans for urban Honolulu.

"Not only will mass transit speed the movement of people and ease traffic, but it will create construction jobs, develop new business centers at key terminals, and provoke us into rethinking the way we live and work, much like the people of great cities around the world."

U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie said Hawai'i's congressional delegation will lobby for federal money for a massive transit project only after a solid decision has been made by state and city officials.

"Myself, I would like to see a combination perhaps," Abercrombie said. "But I think a decision has to be made by the council and the mayor and the Legislature. Whatever conclusion they come to they can count on my support and, I'm sure, on the support of Rep. (Ed) Case."

The city canceled a rail plan in 1982 after a change of administration and lost \$600 million in federal money in 1992 after the City Council rejected a light-rail system by a 5-4 vote.

Lingle, who has proposed elevated toll lanes that would run parallel to H-1 Freeway from Kapolei to Honolulu, said that she was encouraged by Bunda's "surprising" proposal and she is open to reviewing the specifics of his initiative.

Honolulu Mayor Jeremy Harris, pleased that Bunda brought up the issue, said he was glad to hear the state did not intend to do anything that would slow or thwart the city's plans for the in-town Bus Rapid Transit system, which has been in the works for the past four years.

The city's plans for a BRT system and Bunda's light-rail proposal are not mutually exclusive. "There's plenty of room for lots of new ideas that can be instituted," Harris said. "I look forward to working cooperatively with the Senate president and the governor in terms of traffic improvements."

He cautioned that if the state planned to apply for federal money for a light-rail or other mass transit system, it could be a four- to six-year process.

"It's important that people realize that we have spent 32 years working on transit and have yet to put a spade in the ground," the mayor said.